

BOOK REVIEWS

IN CHARGE OF
M. E. CAMERON



LEAVES FROM A NURSE'S LIFE HISTORY. By Jean S. Edmonds.

It does not fall to the lot of many nurses to meet so many and widely-diversified experiences as Miss Edmonds has encountered in her ten years of professional life. These experiences are just faintly indicated in the little book which is offered under the title "Leaves from a Nurse's Life History." The book itself makes no literary pretensions. Indeed, one is inclined to quarrel with the author, who has evidently been guided by her Shakespeare: "We wound our modesty, and make foul the clearness of our deservings, when we ourselves publish them." It is only the boldest facts which we are given, and these in the most abrupt and ungarnished and disconnected style; yet one lays down the finished book with a feeling of amazement, which gradually becomes one of great respect for our own calling. The book takes us from point to point with the swiftness of a dream. From the log-cabin home in Canada to the Rochester Homeopathic Hospital Training-School; a short but apparently most happy year of private duty; then back to discipline and study again, this time in the Newton Theological Seminary in preparation for foreign missionary work. Next we find her in the Congo Free State, where her energy apparently spent itself too prodigally, as she was sent home, invalided, in two years. Taking up private duty again, she had but had time to realize the pleasure of working among refined surroundings, when at the outbreak of the Spanish-American war there came a call for volunteer nurses. Miss Edmonds was one of the first to respond and went South to Camp Sternberg, Chickamauga Park, in August of 1898. December of the following year finds her in Manila, where on Christmas Day she went on duty in the First Reserve Hospital; from there she was later transferred to Santa Mesa. A year later finds her again homeward bound, on board the transport "Logan." Fourteen days in America, then off again for Manila, this time to remain until, with the end of the war, fewer nurses were required in the East. Here comes what seems to be a real holiday, spent in the company of her sister, a missionary, in India. The home journey to San Francisco is made leisurely and profitably, visiting China and Japan *en route*. At San

Francisco she enters once more the calm and humdrum field of private nursing, pursuing this uneventful course until December, 1905, when she was obliged to change places with herself, and the nurse became a patient. She gives no particulars, merely mentions that she "emerged from the hospital crippled by the loss of a foot after untold torture." Within six weeks she wakes one morning to the agony of impending death from the great earthquake. This part of the book is naturally the most graphic, being the latest experience and one too well calculated to wipe out everything that went before it. She leaves us happy in her safe retreat at Berkely, California, rejoicing in the thought that her late companions in misery are also safely delivered. There is no whining apprehension as to the future; no hint of suggestion that here ends everything that makes life worth living; no fear of losing that splendid independence; in fact, one feels that the book only ends because we have reached time's present moment, and that in another year Miss Edmonds will have another and a larger volume for her waiting readers.

It is a thousand pities that this most wonderful little book should seem to be restricted by the manner of its publication. Printed by a Rochester newspaper, and offered for sale by a local bookseller, it stands a poor chance of the wide circulation which it ought to have. It deserves a high place in the propagandist literature of the profession, not at all for its literary merit, but for the light it throws on the opportunities of the profession.

To those inveterate grumblers who shall say, on reading, that they don't see much prospect of following in Miss Edmonds' footsteps now that the war is over, and the earthquake has passed, we beg to point out that Miss Edmonds' starting point, the missionary field, still remains. In this week's issue of *The Living Church* there is a letter signed by the secretary of the Woman's Auxiliary, at the Church Mission House, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York, calling for forty-five women workers, of whom many are required to be trained nurses, offering as a choice of location the Philippines, Alaska, China, Japan and Porto Rico.